

DISPOSITION OF BORON DEPOSITS.

JANUARY 27, 1921.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. SINNOTT, from the Committee on the Public Lands, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 15445.]

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 15445), to provide for the disposition of boron deposits, having considered the same, report it to the House with the recommendation that it do pass.

This bill, the purpose of which is to bring deposits of boron minerals within the terms of the general mineral land leasing act, approved February 25, 1920, was introduced at the request of the Department of the Interior. The reasons why the department deemed it proper and necessary that boron minerals should be classed with those provided for in the general land leasing bill is more particularly set out in a communication from the Acting Secretary of the Interior to the chairman of the Committee on the Public Lands of the House of Representatives, dated December 29, 1920. The communication is set out in full for the information of the House, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, December 29, 1920.

Hon. N. J. SINNOTT,

Chairman Committee on the Public Lands, House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. SINNOTT: Herewith find draft of a proposed bill to provide for the disposal of deposits of boron minerals contained in lands owned by the United States.

The purpose of the bill is to make all deposits suitable for the production of borax, other borates, or boric acid, subject to disposal only under the sodium provisions of the general leasing act approved February 25, 1920 (41 Stat., 437), except deposits of potassium borates, which are specifically named in the potash leasing act approved October 2, 1917 (40 Stats., 297).

The department is persuaded that deposits of colemanite and priceite, from which the borax of this country is derived, are not included within the provisions of either of the above-mentioned leasing acts for the reason that said minerals are not borates of either potassium or sodium, but are borates of calcium. Colemanite deposits are now subject to appropriation under the provisions of the general mining statutes, section 2318 et seq., Revised Statutes.

The production of crude boron ore in this country for the year 1917 was reported to be 108,875 short tons, valued at \$3,609,632. See Mineral Resources, 1917, Part

II—Nonmetals, House Document No. 1864, Sixty-fifth Congress, third session, pages 338 et seq. The refined borax produced that year was derived entirely from colemanite mined in southern California.

The deposits from which borax and boron compounds can be produced are so closely allied to the group of sodium minerals covered by the general leasing act that it appears to be highly desirable to include such deposits in that legislation. I recommend that the bill submitted or some similar measure be enacted.

Cordially, yours,

ALEXANDER T. VOGELSANG, *Acting Secretary.*

